

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: BENC, EWWT, MX
SUBJECT: MAJOR PROJECT: ISTHMUS OF TEHUANTEPEC LAND
BRIDGE AND RAILROAD

(A) STATE 194521 NOTAL, (B) STATE 181897, (C) MEXICO 10380,
(D) MEXICO 7720 NOTAL

1. GOM PLANS FOR ELECTRIFIED ISTHMUS OF TEHUANTEPEC
RAILROAD (REFTEL D) REMAIN ON BACK BURNER BECAUSE OF
FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS AND GOM DECISION THAT MEXICO CITY
METRO EXPANSION AND SUBURBAN RAILROAD (REPORTED SEPTELS)
ARE OF GREATER PRIORITY. RE TRUCK/CONTAINER LANDBRIDGE
PROPOSAL ACROSS ISTHMUS, RECENT INQUIRIES MADE BY TCO
INDICATE PROJECT IS STILL "BEING STUDIED" AND NO DECISION
HAS BEEN REACHED. PROJECT, IF IMPLEMENTED (SEE BELOW),
DOES NOT ENVISAGE INITIALLY ANY MAJOR NEW PORT FACILITIES
AT EITHER COATZACOALCOS OR SALINA CRUZ. GOM, HOWEVER,
DOES PLAN OR HAS UNDERWAY PORT IMPROVEMENTS AT COATZA-
COALCOS AT THE PEMEX TERMINAL AND GENERAL CARGO PORT AREA.
IMPROVEMENTS AT LATTER ARE NECESSARY TO HANDLE GROWING
PETROLEUM EQUIPMENT IMPORTS OF PEMEX. MOREOVER, JAPANESE
ARE UNDERWRITING 100 MILLION DOLLAR IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM AT
PEMEX PORT TERMINAL IN SALINA CRUZ. PORT CONGESTION
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SITUATION AT COATZACOALCOS AND PRIORITY NEEDS OF PEMEX
THERE MAY BE REASON NO DECISION HAS BEEN FORTHCOMING ON
LANDBRIDGE PROPOSAL.

2. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON THE LANDBRIDGE PROJECT THAT
WAS PASSED ON TO TCO BY MARITIME CONTACT BASED ON LATTER'S
RECENT CONVERSATION WITH RECARDO MENDOZA, THE PERSONAL

ASSISTANT TO SCT UNDER SECRETARY ING. JOSE JUAN VELARDE
BONIN IS AS FOLLOWS:

(A) MENDOZA HAS BEEN ASSIGNED RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE
PROJECT BY SCT SECRETARY EMILIO MUJICA MONTOYA, AND,
ACCORDING TO THE FORMER, THE PROJECT IS A FACT;

(B) BY THE END OF 1977, THE GOM PLANS TO ESTABLISH A FREE
ZONE CORRIDOR ACROSS THE ISTHMUS BETWEEN BOTH COASTS;

(C) GOM WILL GO OUT OF ITS WAY TO PROVIDE ALL NECESSARY
ASSISTANCE, INCLUDING PREFERENTIAL BERTHING, TO THE FIRST
LINE THAT AGREES TO UTILIZE THIS SHORT CUT BETWEEN THE
ATLANTIC AND PACIFIC OCEANS;

(D) FOUR LINES REPORTED AS PROBABLY FARRELL, TMM OR MEXI-
CAN LINE, SEA-TRAIN AND ONE OTHER -- POSSIBLY ONE OF THOSE
NAMED IN REFTEL (C) HAVE EXPRESSED INTEREST IN THE LAND-
BRIDGE;

(E) SERVICE WOULD INVOLVE THE USE OF TRUCKS TO/FROM PORT
TERMINALS WITH AN INITIAL CAPACITY OF 300 FORTY FOOT CON-
TAINERS EACH WAY EVERY 48 HOURS. ADEQUATE CONTROL AND
YARD FACILITIES WILL BE PROVIDED AT BOTH ENDS. PORTS WILL
BE CAPABLE OF HANDLING VESSELS OF 20,000 GROSS TONS, 210
METERS IN LENGTH, WITH A CAPACITY OF UP TO 400 CONTAINERS,
PREFERABLY WITH THEIR OWN LOADING/UNLOADING GEAR;

(F) INITIAL PROJECT CALLS FOR HANDLING 5 OR 6 VESSELS A
WEEK AT EACH TERMINAL. A CONTAINER CRANE PRESENTLY AT
LAZARO CARDENAS WOULD BE KNOCKED DOWN AND SET UP AGAIN AT
SALINA CRUZ. BOTH EQUIPMENT (CONTAINERS) AND CARGO WOULD
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BE FULLY GUARANTEED; AND

(G) CONSERVATIVE ESTIMATE IS THAT LANDBRIDGE COULD OFFER
A SAVING IN TIME AND COST OF 60 THOUSAND DOLLARS PER
ROUND-TRIP VOYAGE VIS-A-VIS PANAMA CANAL. ALL CHARGES
WOULD BE IN PESOS RATHER THAN DOLLARS, AND SHORT, MEDIUM
OR LONG TERM, GUARANTEED AGREEMENTS COULD BE MADE AS TO
SERVICES TO BE PERFORMED AND CORRESPONDING COSTS.
THOMPSON

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